

“... all successful writing-process instruction depends on empowering students as writers, not simply following a prescribed formula.”

Barry Lane, *After THE END: Teaching and Learning Creative Revision*

Various Depictions of the Writing Process

5-Step Process	7-Step Process	8-Step Process
Prewriting	Brainstorm	Prewriting
Drafting	Map	Drafting
Revising	Freewrite	Conferencing
Editing	Draft	Reflecting
Publishing	Revise	Revising
	Clarify	Editing
	Edit	Publishing
		Reflection &
		Instruction

NOTES: 5-step is common among ELA teachers; Barry Lane suggests we really use the 7-step one since we tend to put more energy into the prewriting stages and rarely include authentic publishing occasions (he recommends a process that is “revise, revise, revise...”); the 8-step process includes what we know about the role of conferencing and reflectionand comes closer to the inquiry cycle that represents what writers really do.

We might connect to reading process as we consider how we develop activities to support writers during three key phases: prewriting – during writing – after writing.

Things We Know About Writing & Writing Instruction

- Writing is a social act. Talk is part of the process.
{brainstorming, group work during idea generation, conferencing during writing & revising, group & peer assessment at publishing stage}
- Writing is a process. It is not linear. It does not happen in the same way each time a person sits down to write. {struggling writers may benefit more from directed approaches but they need to be encouraged to develop their own process and select tools for independent writing....just as they do with reading}
- Writing requires ongoing reflection....alone and with others.
{often we forget to reflect at the end and then at the beginning of subsequent writing experiences so students don't revisit their own works to continue to learn from them --- goal setting and revisiting add to improvement}
- Writers get better at writing by writing. {authentic practice is key; students quickly catch on to the meaninglessness of something like journal writing if it only serves as a way to kill time and keep them busy}
- Writers engage in writing when they have real purposes and audiences. Choice and authenticity are critical to engagement. {choice in topics, format, publication forums, group members, etc.}
- Clear, logical writing reflects clear, logical thinking. Writing makes thinking visible. {remember, though, that some students think more coherently than they write --- be careful not to assume they cannot think just because they have not mastered common conventions or a form}
- Fluency must be developed before clarity; clarity (control) must be developed before accuracy and correctness (precision). Writers need to get it down before they worry about getting it right.{key to helping struggling writers, but also for all writers in new writing situations...we do not need to grade everything students write in order to show how valuable it is. Genuine feedback is more important.}